



# NATIONAL COMMISSIONER OF THE ICELANDIC POLICE

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL  
PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT



Applies to: The media, [almannavarnir.is](http://almannavarnir.is), Administration and Chief Epidemiologist's contacts.

## STATUS REPORT

Date: 01.04.2020

Time: 17:00

Location: Coordination Centre / Directorate of Health / Chief Epidemiologist

Emergency / Distress Phase: COVID-19

### Event description

Every effort is being made to distribute information and advice to the public, to public bodies and to companies. All instructions can be found on the [Directorate of Health](http://Directorate of Health) website, the [National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police](http://National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police) website and the [covid.is](http://covid.is) information website.

### Advice regarding Covid-19

#### Ways to get advice from nurses:

#### Serious illness:

- Phone the 1700 number outside working hours
- Call your health-care centre during working hours

#### Lesser illness:

- Communication through My Pages on Heilsuvera.is
- Net chat on [heilsuvera.is](http://heilsuvera.is) - 8:00–22:00h

The Medical Hotline (Læknavaktin) and Heilsuvera are under a great deal of strain. We urge everyone to read the information available on the above-mentioned websites.

The number of people in Iceland with confirmed infections is currently 1,220, with 982 in isolation. There are a total of 803 domestic infections and 116 with unknown origins. A total of 19,516 samples have been taken, including 1,612 in the last 24 hours. Of the people diagnosed with COVID-19 in Iceland, two have passed away.

[According to the National University Hospital](#) there are currently 40 patients in the hospital with COVID-19, of which 11 are in intensive care and 10 on respirators. 926 are being monitored by the COVID-19 outpatient unit, including 89 children who are being monitored by the Children's Hospital. 236 individuals have recovered and 26 individuals have been discharged from the hospital.

### Today's press conference

Participants: **Víðir Reynisson**, Chief Superintendent of Police; **Þórólfur Guðnason**, Chief Epidemiologist; **Alma D. Möller**, Director of Health; **Páll Matthíasson**, Director of the National University Hospital; and **Unnur Sverrisdóttir**, Director of the Directorate of Labour.

**Víðir Reynisson** started the meeting by introducing the guests.

Chief Epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason reviewed today's statistics. The strain on the intensive care unit is in keeping with the worst-case-scenario prediction of the University of Iceland predictive model. On the other hand, the numbers from deCODE can be interpreted to mean that community-acquired infections are very low. The epidemic is in slow growth and the preventive measures can be said to have helped slow it down. Under such circumstances, the inevitable option is to continue on the same path. The Chief Epidemiologist will therefore recommend to the Minister of Health to extend the ban on social gathering, which is currently in place until 13 April, to 30. April. However, the preventive measures will be under continuous re-evaluation as the epidemic develops. Great care must be taken in lifting the ban on social gatherings and the restriction of the number of people in one place at the same time, as otherwise there is a risk that the epidemic will re-emerge. It is very important for everyone to be patient. Vulnerable groups must be safeguarded and it is important that everyone who has an infection, especially ones with respiratory tract symptoms, stays at home. Finally, the Chief Epidemiologist pointed out the importance of sampling and added that deCODE has started a randomised sampling study. He urged people who are invited to participate in the study to accept the invitation.

**Director of Health Alma Möller** expressed praise and thanks to all health-care service staff for their work. Everyone is doing a fantastic job with quality of work and patient safety as the guiding light. The Director of Health's recommendation to suspend all elective surgeries in hospitals, and to draw the line at operations that can be safely delayed by up to eight weeks, still stands. Dr. Möller discussed the new smartphone app "Rakning C-19". Its development is now finished and the Data Protection Authority has given permission for its use in Iceland. However, the app has not yet been made available. Both Apple and Google are looking at the app before making it available through their services. Dr. Möller iterated that registration for the health-care and welfare service reserve teams is still ongoing. Over 1,000 persons have now registered for each team. Those who volunteer can choose what kinds of jobs they will do, but there is a shortage of extra hands for various jobs – including ones that are not directly related to COVID-19.

**Director of the National University Hospital Páll Matthíasson** said that some 40 patients with confirmed COVID-19 infections are currently in hospital. The intensive care patients are aged 50–80, which is a reminder that the disease does not exclusively have severe effects on the elderly, although they are certainly more at risk. It is always a serious matter when patients need to receive respirator treatment. This is a long-term treatment that can take 2–3 weeks. All the patients in the hospital who have started a respirator treatment due to COVID-19 are still on respirators. Today, 186 National University Hospital staff members are under quarantine and 36 are in isolation. A total of 926 people are being monitored by the COVID-19 outpatient unit, including 89 children. There are now 18 intensive care spaces in Fossvogur, in the intensive care unit and the post-anaesthesia care unit, that are mostly devoted to COVID-19 patients. The updated plan now assumes that the intensive care unit in Hringbraut will receive intensive care patients when the facilities in Fossvogur have become fully occupied. Wards A7 and A6 are now receiving patients who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have a suspected COVID-19 infection, and ward B5 has now started receiving patients from this group. Special arrangements have been made in preparation for admitting children.

Dr. Matthíasson said that the National University Hospital serves the whole country and all patients. He added that people who are seriously ill should not hesitate to make contact. In case of emergency, people should come to the intensive care unit, in which case they should notify the unit that they are showing typical COVID-19 symptoms. Cooperation with all health-care institutions around the country has been close – we are one service network and that network is now being severely tested. Everyone has been doing a good job, and Dr. Matthíasson made special mention of the Landakot staff, who have been under a lot of stress in the last few days. The cleaning and maintenance staff must not be forgotten, as they are an important part of the service chain in times like these.

#### **Director of the Directorate of Labour Unnur Sverrisdóttir**

COVID-19 has had a tremendous effect on the labour market. Ms. Sverrisdóttir said that we have never really seen a situation like it before. A total of 26 thousand individuals have applied for reduced working hours in line with a new law that was adopted by Althingi on 20 March. Of those who sent in applications, 76 % are Icelandic and 24 % are of foreign extraction. Around half of the applicants worked in the tourism industry. In the last few days, applications have also been coming in from people in various trades, such as hairdressing, beauty salons, from specialist doctors and medical and dental clinics which are now closed. A total of 32 thousand applications for unemployment benefits or compensation for reduced work hours have been received in March. Some 16 thousand applications were received during the whole of 2019, which shows the tremendous strain the Directorate is under. Around 3,000 phone calls are coming in per day, but the Directorate staff are only able to answer about half of those.

Likewise, around 800 emails are coming in every 24 hours and not all of those can be answered on the same day. Ms. Sverrisdóttir therefore wished to ask the Directorate's clients to seek information and answers to their questions on the Directorate's website. [The Directorate of Labour's COVID-19 information page](#)

The website contains answers to many questions. Ms. Sverrisdóttir said she hoped the authorities' remedies would help most of those who are experiencing difficulties due to the current situation in the labour market. The labour market situation has been good for a long time and most of the people using the remedies will not be impairing their right to compensation.

The goal is for all the compensation payments to be paid out by 7 April. However, employers will have to send in an electronic attestation that an agreement for reduced work hours has been made. The payments to employers in keeping with the Act on payments to employers, which was also adopted on 20 March, are under preparation. The computer system will not be ready until after Easter or around the end of the month.

Finally, Ms. Sverrisdóttir praised her staff, saying that they have done a remarkable job and shown solidarity during these difficult times.

**Chief Superintendent of Police Víðir Reynisson** closed the conference and asked the public to remember that the virus is going to behave the same over the holidays as it does on workdays. Therefore, people should stay at home over the Easter holidays. Unnecessary travel around the country is inadvisable. It is also important to do all the shopping in time for the holidays. Also, please use each shopping trip well and make fewer trips than you usually do.

If you are invited to come in for sampling, just go straight to the sampling location and do not use the time to run errands as well. If you have symptoms, you should just stay at home. Do not be the tough, hard Icelander who goes to work when they are feeling under the weather or are sick.

#### Information sharing and projects

The civil protection authorities' Coordination Centre coordinates all action and disseminates information regarding COVID-19 all over the country.

**The Red Cross** Due to the strain on the Red Cross telephone helpline 1717 and the net chat at 1717.is, the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) has decided to support the service. The support will boost up the helpline and net chat to aid people, such as families, children and young people, people with disabilities, the elderly and people of foreign origin during these unprecedented times. This will better enable the Icelandic Red Cross to fulfil its mission.

**Health-care workers** at the Coordination Centre are looking at housing that may be used as a reserve hospital, in cooperation with the National University Hospital. They are also putting together an overall plan for all health-care institutions on COVID-19 responses. They are also looking into protective gear and how to ensure that there is always a good stock of necessary gear available.

**The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Consular Service** has replied to around 4,600 inquiries since 14 March. Some 11,400 individuals have registered in the Consular Service's database since 25 February, and out of that number more than 8,000 are estimated to have arrived home or decided to stay put. The Consular Service staff have called more than 2,000 persons who were still abroad according to the database, to find that around 75 % of those had either returned home or decided to stay put. Passenger flights continue to become scarcer and many borders are closed. The Consular Service continues its mission to give guidance to people who are planning to return home and is working in close cooperation with the Consular Services of the Nordic countries and other partner states in Europe.

[Response to a Covid-19 infection in Bolungarvík](#) A Covid-19 infection has been confirmed in Bolungarvík, and there is suspicion of more cases. The West Fjords District Operations Command has therefore decided, in consultation with the Chief Epidemiologist, the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police's Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management and the local school authorities, to suspend all teaching in the Bolungarvík primary school at the middle

and secondary level, as of 1. April and until otherwise decided.

The [Rakning C-19 App](#) The development of a contact-tracing app is almost complete. This is an innovative link in the extensive measures to slow down and hopefully reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The app will soon be available in the App Store and on Google Play and further information will be given when it launches.

**The website [www.covid.is](http://www.covid.is)**

Statistical information about the disease is updated once a day and published at 13:00h on the covid.is website.

The website contains information about the measures that have been taken in Iceland due to the COVID-19 disease. The website is in constant development and is regularly updated. It is currently available in Icelandic, Icelandic sign language, English and Polish. Specific important information is also available in Arabic, Spanish, Kurdish, Lithuanian, Persian and Thai.

**Upcoming:**

- Press conferences will be held every day at 14:03h.
- The next COVID-19 coordination meeting will be held on Tuesday 2 April at 9:00h.

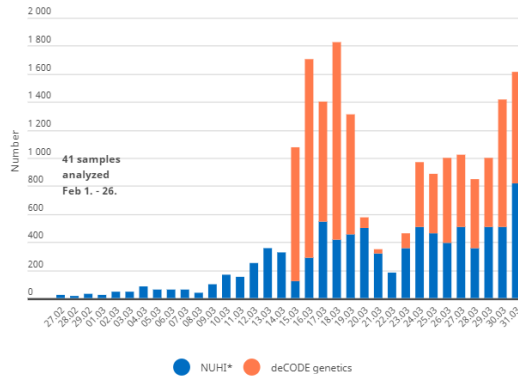
Updated every day at 13:00



### COVID-19 in Iceland - Statistics

- Information on this page is obtained from the database at midnight.

#### Number of tests per day



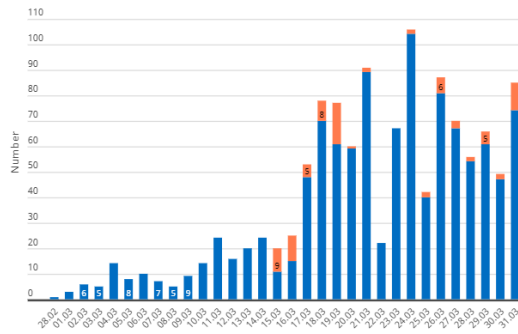
[Download data](#)

\*The National University Hospital of Iceland, The Department of Microbiology

#### Total figures



#### Number of infected persons, by date

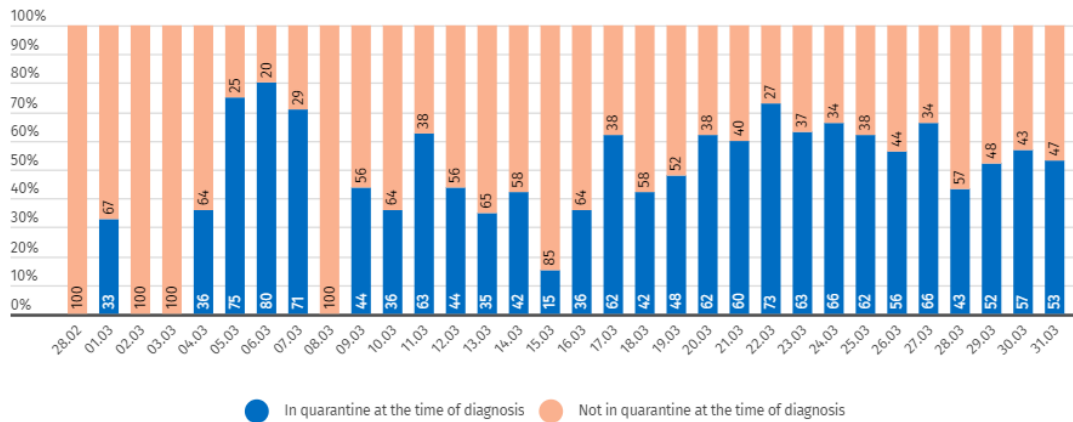


#### Percentage of infected persons who were diagnosed while in quarantine



**54%**

of those who were diagnosed were in quarantine



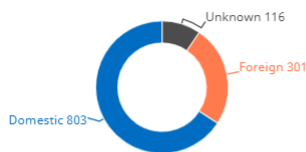
[Download data](#)

### Number of infected persons, by gender



Download data

### Origin of infection



Download data

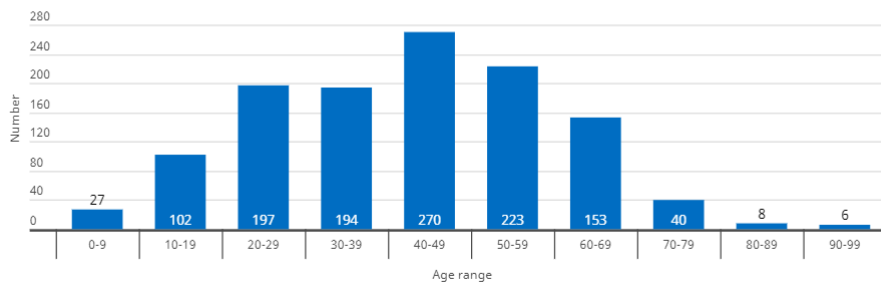
### Infections / Quarantine, by region



	Infections	Quarantine
Greater Reykjavik	918	3.951
Suðurnes Peninsula	54	378
South Iceland	118	767
East Iceland	5	171
Northeast Iceland	34	375
Northwest Iceland	29	146
West Fjords	6	151
West Iceland	24	274
Unknown	32	1.609
Abroad	0	0

Download data

### Number of infected persons, by age



Download data

## Coronavirus – Global spread

According to Johns Hopkins, **883,225 individual cases** of COVID-19 have been confirmed today and **44,156 individuals** have died. 185,377 **individuals** have already **recovered** from the illness. There has been a surge in the distribution of the virus. The ECDC has raised its risk assessment to a risk of a moderate to high threat to public health. Cf. the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/european-centre-for-disease-prevention-and-control) website for information on the development in each country. Cf. the ECDC risk assessment.